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RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 4084
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 4208
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1809
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 5593
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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ELA, NEA-I, AND EEB
BAGHDAD FOR D. DECARME, A. HENDRY, AND E. RYAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: JORDAN AND IRAQ RENEW AIR TRANSPORT MEMORANDUM
OF UNDERSTANDING

¶1. (SBU) Jordan Civil Aviation Regulatory Commission (CARC) President Suleiman Obeidat confirmed to Embassy DHS Attache that CARC and the Iraqi Civil Aviation Authority had renewed a Memo of Understanding (MoU) on July 23, expanding air transportation cooperation between the two countries, and committing Jordan to a "good faith effort" to help Iraq rebuild its aviation infrastructure.

¶2. (SBU) The agreement, signed by Obeidat and his Iraqi counterpart, Subeih Shibani, is a renewal of a 2004 agreement, with this latest edition adding more language concerning specific airports, as well as cargo and passenger rules. Under this MoU the two countries each identified two national carriers to operate in each other's airspace/countries. Jordan has selected Royal Jordanian Airlines (RJ) and the Royal Falcon Company as its national carriers, although RJ has the contracts granting broader access to the Iraq airports. Royal Falcon can currently operate only in Mosul and Najaf. (NOTE: Royal Falcon owns and operates only one Boeing 737-400 and has one other, a Boeing 767, on a "dry" lease arrangement. END NOTE). Iraq named Iraqi Airways and "any other carrier" which it can name at a later date.

¶3. (SBU) Obeidat specifically denied press reports that the aviation memo would "deregulate issuing visas for Iraqi travelers," noting that he had no authority to do any such thing, and had no idea where that item came from. He mentioned, however, that the CARC had received complaints regarding Jordanian officials harassing Iraqis who arrive via Iraqi Airways (but not those arriving via RJ), and said CARC was investigating those.

¶4. (SBU) The agreement further stipulates the airports selected for inclusion under this arrangement, with Jordan naming Queen Alia International Airport in Amman and King Hussein Airport in Aqaba, and Iraq identifying Baghdad, Basra, Suleimaniyeh, Irbil, Mosul, and Najaf. (Note: Amman Marka Airport was considered primarily a military airfield for the purposes of this MoU and therefore was not included in this agreement. End Note.) Press reports described specific agreements to operate passenger and cargo flights by each carrier -- without specifying type of aircraft or capacity -- at a weekly rate of seven flights between Amman and Baghdad; four weekly passenger and two cargo flights between Amman and Basra; four weekly passenger flights between Amman and Suleimaniyeh; eight passenger flights between Amman and Irbil; two passenger and two freight flights between Amman and Mosul; and three passenger flights between Amman and Najaf. Iraq's Shibani was quoted as saying the signing reflected a common interest in upgrading aviation cooperation between Iraq and Jordan. Obeidat reportedly said the agreement was in line with the CARC's strategy to promote cooperation with Arab

countries and facilitate civil aviation and air transport.

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